

BIG DINNER TO HAMMERSTEIN

MOST EVERY ONE OUT TO GREET THE BOSS OF AN OPERA HOUSE.

Special Songs and a Small Sized Grand Opera in Honor of Oom Oscar, Who Talks About the Happiest Moments of His Life—Some of These Present.

Miss Stella Hammerstein's father, Mr. Oscar Hammerstein, who has achieved some publicity since Miss Stella ran away with her part in "The American Idea," was the chief guest at a dinner given by the Friars all over the Hotel Astor last night. There were folk there to a number some place between 600 and 1,000, and it was a right angle dinner, because for the first time in the history of Friar dinners the tables squeezed all over the big ballroom and then ran off at right angles down the smaller ballroom, resting on the Victoria Theatre. Oom Oscar himself sat under a draped American flag in a corner at a guest table that was bent to form an arc so that all the notables might be seated.

Two Justices of the Supreme Court, Jack Welch and President McGowan of the Board of Aldermen, were there to begin with. Abbot Charles Emerson Cook was the toastmaster and incidentally used his right arm to support Oom Oscar when the compliments were flying thick and fast. Also at the guest table were President McGowan, Al Hayman, Walter Damrosch, W. J. Henderson, Charles Burnham and Victor Herbert.

And look who's here—there, all over the room: Manuel Klein, Metropolitan Stars Caruso, Armando Lecomte and Constantino to mention only a few; Wells Hawks, Commander George and Lieutenant Commander Croley, Oliver Herford, James Diamond Brady and Henry W. Savage, Pat Casey and David Graham Phillips, Sam S. Scribner and Dan Frohman—both in the show business—the Rascover boys, Eddie, Jim and Hank; Willie Zimmerman, Crickets Wolfford, Klauter, De Foe, Garrison and Freddie Eddie McKay, Justice Blanchard and Playwright Roy McCordell, Justice Charles A. Guy and Jackson Gourdau, Sam Harris and Paul Armstrong, author of "The Superstitions of Sue"; Al Simmons of New York, Mauch Chum and Ostend; the Hammerstein kiddies, Willie, Artie and Harry; Morris Gest and Fred Belasco; all the Witmarks and Campbell Cassa.

De Wolf Hopper and his rival, Marshall Wilder; J. Clarence Harvey and Lip Keene, the Hon. John B. Stanchfield, Dan McCarthy, Billy Rock and the Rev. Dr. Housmann, Nat Wills and Royal Hammerstough, who is no relation to Oscar Hammerstein despite the name; Robert Drouet, Frank Fogarty, Ray Comstock, Sig. Nanco Sammarco, Mayor George Sammi of Sound Beach, Raymond Hitchcock, Ray Hubbard, Ray Peck (the husband of Edith Decker) Ed Cole, Gus Shols, Charles K. Harris, Richard Himmelsbach, Burnside, and other actors; Art Voeglin, John A. Hennessey, Eddie Pidgeon, Johnny Pollock's brother Channing, and Johnny; Marcus Mayer, Majah Burke of the Bill troops, Jimmie Forbes and Sol Berliner. Sol was there and ever so many hundreds of others.

It was interesting during the reception of half an hour or more, while the corridors were jammed with folk, that did not watch the modesty of Oom Oscar, who stood back in a corner beneath a protecting palm that hid his blushes. Oscar never dined with a night before in his life. He has that southeast corner table in the White Room of the Knickerbocker every evening, you know, and tomato soup and celery and faked handkerchiefs and a demi tasse and solitude every evening; and not until a few minutes before the reception got under way, previous to the dinner, did he know that he was to be anything but just a plain or common garden variety of guest. Little does he realize up to yet how big a hit Miss Stella has made.

Dick Burdette of the Hippodrome and Gus Kerker wrote a whole very grand opera for the dinner last night—although they concealed the fact from Oscar that the skit had a hearing of a slightly different form as a lamb. In May, 1904, "Burnt to Sing; or, Singing To Burn," is the name of the creation and it was rendered last night by a cast that included Melville Stewart, George O'Donnell, W. G. Stewart, W. W. Thomas, George Leon Moore and Neal McCay.

Also Charles Emerson Cook and Gus Edwards wrote a song for the occasion that was a very good song. It's named "Hammerstein" and the chorus (forte) runs:

HAMMERSTEIN!
Ooooo, you Oscar!
HAMMERSTEIN!
How we love to have you with us,
HAMMERSTEIN!
If the question's rude, forgive us—
say,
Where did you get that hat,
HAMMERSTEIN!

Also there were speeches by Renold Wolfford, W. J. Henderson, the Hon. Patrick McGowan, Mr. Cook, and of course by Mr. Hammerstein, who told in sincere and homely and honest fashion of the things he has tried at least to do and of the "happiest minute" of his life while everybody yelled and clinked and glassed and hoaxed for him, and the quartet sang songs about the Hat, songs that were lost in the uproar, and the Abbot rapped impromptu for order and both ballrooms split themselves inside out and Victor Herbert personally led the ripping Friars that Victor wrote for the occasion and the waters raced in with Gussie A. Hammerstein and cigars a la Hammerstein and the flashlight man in the balcony banged and there was the Dickens to pay generally.

One couldn't even hear the voices of Pat Casey and Sig. Florencio Constantino as they argued respectfully in Gaelic and Italian—with Police Inspector Walsh throwing a word in now and then—about the durability of Richard Wagner.

When the ice cream came in (pardon, the glaze, a la Hammerstein) all the faint pinkness covered over with miniature Hammerstein hats of silk, then Toastmaster Cook started the orderly fireworks that preceded the earlier detonations. Journalist Wolfford cried his upstiff face as ever, for said journalist is becoming some speaker.

In fact it is said of him that on last Tuesday as he was passing the store of Heppner, the wiggit, an actor that shall be nameless stopped Mr. Wolfford graciously and, after complimenting him enthusiastically as "next to Gus Thomas, the best after dinner speaker in New York," the actor concluded, "Ren, my boy, you are a coming man."

The actor had a friend with him who also wanted to make a touch and had made up his mind to beat the first speaker to it. "Coming!" exclaimed the second actor. "Coming! Why, Ren, my boy, you're here!"

"We have with us to-night," began Mr. Wolfford, "a man of achievements and who won his fame in the cigar business, who welcome as our guest of honor a gentleman whose entire career has been devoted with notable fortitude to the counterfeiting of tobacco and putting it on the market under the guise of perfection." (Sympathetic applause and cries of "Oh, you Oscar!" Oh, you kid!")

"Oscar Hammerstein," continued the noted speaker impressively, "is the most current cigar maker the world has seen at least in modern times. (Heartfelt applause.) Also he is the most daring. (Applause.) Fifteen years ago he moved from Harlem to a factory in Long Acre where he called the Victoria. He was humbler then. All the equipment he had was just a few heads of cabbage and some plain coils of rope. But, gentlemen, from material so humble, the guest of honor to-night evolved the Sire

Brothers panetela, La Flor de Bonel and La Belle Maggie Cline." [Reverent applause.]

The speaker here paid a glowing tribute to the great impresario's cigars. Continuing, the orator said in part: "In those days Mr. Hammerstein had for an office merely Dunlop and a plain cuspidor for office furniture. Trouble (trouble came to him then; for two weeks his office was locked and he could not find the key to his office furniture. And during those two weeks, gentlemen, was our guest of honor idle? No! for it was during those two weeks that he decorated the walls of his Victoria Theatre. [Prolonged applause.]

"Downstairs below his factory he opened a theatre. At the end of two years all he had left was a luxurious white car. (Applause.) Then the Spanish-American war began and he rose like a hero to the opportunities before him to serve his country. He supplied the United States during the dark days of the war with all the cigars in stock, and the Government distributed the cigars among the Spanish soldiers. [Long applause.]

"But our hero, ever ambitious, now began to take up other enterprises as a side line to his tobacco trade. He wrote an opera called 'Santa Maria,' and he said that he wrote the work in twenty-four hours. The thing was incredible—no body would believe him. Then 'Santa Maria' was produced and everybody believed him. [Appreciative applause.]

"As a press agent Mr. Hammerstein is indeed one of you. He has paid some slight attention to grand opera when not rounding up animal acts, but in the meantime his feats of publicity are excellent only by those of President Roosevelt and Count Boni. Our honored guest is more prolific in copy for the press than Harry Thaw and the weather combined. And to-night the Friars welcome Mr. Hammerstein as an impresario, an architect and even as a cigarmaker." [Thunderous applause.]

Napkins waved like the back yard of a laundry on a windy day as Oom Oscar arose to say his say. Both ballrooms were on their feet and the cheers went on for almost two minutes before Mr. Hammerstein got his chance to thank his hosts. "When I have achieved something," Mr. Hammerstein began, "and there results the things I pictured to myself in the beginning, then there comes to me only feeling of sadness and of satisfaction too. I never have felt satisfied altogether, nor proud. Simple as I am (even if I say it, modestly), I can't find the cause of the honor done me to-night. "Nobody succeeds unless he feels the ability to do the work he sets out to do and unless he tells himself first, 'I am the man to do it.' "I need not my conception of what commonly is called an impresario ever since I was a boy. I was taught harmony and to play the violin—that's what my father thought I should learn. My mother thought I should be a flutist. While my father was away one time my mother hired what you call it—a professor of flute, of fluting; and when my father came back and was sleeping the next morning my mother said: 'Oscar, stand by his door and flute. I did and he woke up and came out and gave me the hardest licking a boy ever got. And I had played for him. When the Swallows Homeward Fly."

"Then I swore revenge. I said I would take it out on the music loving people. The chance came several years ago and I did it—with enthusiasm. But I did it with a knowledge of what brings success—the knowledge that in America there is a public that loves music as no nation in the world loves it."

"Nothing in the world would better repay me for what I've tried to do than the minutes of satisfaction you are giving me now. My life is one of solitude. I live in little room high up in my theatre, all by myself. I belong to no societies, no clubs. I have no desire to pose—nor even to occupy my box in my own opera house. But I cannot tell you how glad I am to be a part of this great assemblage to-night, the happiest I have known. And for the honor you have shown me, for the minutes of happiness you have caused me to experience to-night I say, God bless you all."

A big noise got under way again after Oscar had finished his speech, and somehow got his hat from the cloakroom and sent it up to him filled with cigars. He tossed the cigars out to his hosts while he sang and later on he sang the new song to him. And after that there was the opera—a pathetic story of folks, grand opera folks, in a burning hotel who sing madrigals and later on he listened to the bellboy's recitative until the basso freman sings many verses to them that he has come to save when the finale shall have ended. Speeches and speeches and songs with Victor Herbert still waving time with a Hammerstein cigar and more speeches and the banging of piano keys and corks until it was long after time to go away from there.

THE KLEIN CONCERT.

Gabrilowitsch the Feature of the Deutsches Theatre Programme. Gabrilowitsch furnished the chief interest in yesterday afternoon's Hermann Klein concert at the little Deutsches Theatre in Fifty-fifth street. Mr. Gabrilowitsch played Schumann's "Des Abends," a gavotte by Gluck-Brahms, a polonaise by Chopin, a barcarole by Rubinstein, Moskowitsch's minor, "En automne," and an étude in F minor by Liszt. The house did the best it could in the matter of applause.

The other performers were the Kaufman String Quartet, Albert Janpolski, a Russian baritone, and Eva Myriots. The quartet gave numbers by Haydn and Schumann. Mr. Janpolski sang Tchaikowsky's "If Blissful Days," a Russian folk song, Kallimikoff's "On a Hoary Burial Mound," No More, by Henschel; "When All the World is Young," by Beale; "The Wind Speaks," by Grant-Schaefer, and Edward German's "Rolling Down to Rio."

Miss Myriots had "Caro mio ben," a song by Giordani, and an aria from Giocondo, "Voce di donna," for her first number, and four English songs, "Late, Late, So Late," by Gluck-Brahms, "Caution," by Bliss; "Caution," by Gluck-Brahms, "Life's Recompense," by Del Riego, for her second.

Arthur Rosenstein was the accompanist of the afternoon.

News of Plays and Players.

Jefferson De Angelis has been engaged by Percy G. Williams and will make his vaudeville debut at the Colonial Theatre the week of January 4. Mr. De Angelis will be seen in a one act musical comedy skit.

Joseph O'Mara, the Irish actor and singer who opens at the Broadway Theatre Monday, December 21, in "Peggy Macree," will be supported by Miss Adrienne Augarde, who has been brought from England for this engagement. Miss Augarde has been identified with numerous London successes under the management of George Edwards, but has not been seen in America except for a brief appearance in "The Duchess of Dantzic" at Daly's several years ago.

J. Townsend Russell announces that he will give two picture readings on the evenings of December 16 and December 23 at the Carnegie Lyceum. The subject chosen for the first entertainment is Henry W. Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn," and the famous poems will be illustrated by electrically projecting upon a great sheet, 150 colored lantern slides made from original paintings.

Commencing with Monday matinee, December 21, Hurlitz and Seamon's musical and dramatic stock companies will alternately occupy the stages of the Metropolitan and Yorkville theatres. Each production will be made for two weeks, and it has been arranged that a musical comedy will follow a dramatic offering, moving the companies from one theatre to the other. "A Trip to China-town" has been selected for the first bill at the Metropolitan Theatre. In the Bishop's "Carriage" is on the opening programme at the Yorkville Theatre.

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CHEAPER BOOKS FOR BLIND

NEW PLANT PERMITS PRINTING ON BOTH SIDES.

First Trial to Be Made on the Sunday School Lessons and Religious Reading Sent Out by a New York Society—The Point System Is Still the One Used.

The Sunday school lessons printed for the blind covering the first quarter of the new year 1937 go to press this month with a new process. The invention is a New York one.

Up to the present time it has not been possible to utilize both sides of the paper in embossing tactile prints, so that texts for the blind, always expensive, have been greater because only one side of the high priced paper could be used. The improvement has been made by two prominent educators of the blind, William B. Wait, principal emeritus of the New York Institute for the Blind, and B. B. Hunt, superintendent of the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville.

They have worked out the two side printing, known as the interlined point. It may be described briefly as embossing on one side of a page between the lines of embossed work on the other. Books for the blind are printed, as everybody knows, in a raised or embossed letter. The earliest books were called the Boston line. The books possible to be made by it were large and clumsy as well as expensive.

Mr. Wait devised the common point system. Now has come the double point, or point on both sides of the paper, and it is counted that the reduction in cost will be fully 40 per cent., perhaps as much as half. Realizing the importance of the work, the Government has removed postal requirements by permitting free mail transportation to all reading matter loaned to blind people.

The point system for the blind is based in effect on the six spot on dominoes, and out of these spots has been constructed a whole alphabet. The advantage of it is that the blind can themselves write letters and carry on personal correspondence with their friends. They use a perforated piece of metal resembling a cribbage board. A stylus is used instead of pen. As soon as public schools took up this point system, a reading club was created among the blind. The Government provided text books, but there was no religious literature.

So leaders of half a dozen Protestant bodies formed the Society for Providing Evangelical Religious Literature for the Blind. Its president is Bishop Whitaker of Pennsylvania, and in its management are Bishop Foss, Arthur E. Newbold, Pierpont Morgan & Co., William B. Howland of the Outlook and William B. Wait. The society is represented in New York by the Rev. Albert Dale Gantz, with headquarters in the American Tract Society Building.

The Sunday school lessons are printed on the new point system in the form of a periodical. The old cost has been \$6.00 a year. It will not be less under the new system, for it is intended to increase the size of the publication. There is need for more reading matter for the blind, and religious leaders are now trying to establish suitable libraries.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

"The Toy Shop," the name given to the short story study of Lincoln made by Margarita Spalding Gerry, was not only a real shop in Washington but Jacob Stunz and his wife were real people. It is said that toys of his making were found collected in a room of the White House after the President's death.

"Women's a regrettable hindrance," according to Wiggleswick, the disreputable valet in "Simple Septimus," W. J. Locke's forthcoming story. "A woman," he says, "what with her dusting and cleaning and washing of herself in hot water and putting flowers in mugs, do upset things terrible. I had a lot of experience before I could learn the blessedness of a single life."

"The Garden and Farm Almanac for 1937" has made its appearance with an interesting preface and a great deal of valuable information for the lover of gardens and all kinds of things "a-growing." From this preface it may be learned that the second piece of printing done in the Colonies was an almanac. In these early days this household reference book, which hung beside every fireplace, formed the complete record of the affairs and accounts of the family. At the time Franklin published his famous "Poor Richard" in Philadelphia there were eight others published in the same city.

The principal personages in Kenneth Grahame's new story, which is one of the most delightful holiday books, are a simple hearted Mole, a Water Bat of a poetical temperament and a wealthy, beautiful and extravagant Toad with a fine Tudor mansion and a passion for motoring. The story rambles along in a joyous, extravagant fashion, with whimsical incursions into the human world that are peculiarly Mr. Grahame's style. It is interesting to know that this imaginative writer with his daring blending of the idyl and inconsequence, his fanciful and childlike extravagance, is the secretary of the Bank of England.

The Champlain Society of Toronto has decided to undertake with Mr. H. P. Figgis as editor a translation of the complete works of Champlain and at the same time to reprint the French text. The whole work will make up four volumes. Mr. Figgis is known as the author

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of "The Early Trading Companies of New France" and other historical works.

In "The Weird of Sir Lancelot," in the current North American Review, Mary Child explains that the true source of resentment against Tennyson's exaltation of the marriage tie against the instincts of love in his "Idylls" is to be found less in the fact that Tennyson's own marriage was such an ideal union than that he follows Mallory in the perversion of the old story. The writer gives perhaps the oldest version extant, "The High History of the Holy Grail," which presents in Guinevere an ideal wife and in Lancelot a chivalrous knight loyal to his King in every way. Of his love for the Queen he says: "It seemeth to me the fairest and the sweetest that ever I committed. . . . The affection seemeth me so good and so high that I cannot let go thereof, for so rooted is it in my heart that thence may it never more depart, and the best knight hood that is in me cometh to me only of her affection."

Miss Elizabeth Deering Hanscom's new volume, "The Friendly Craft," is an appropriate companion to Mr. Lucas's "The Gentlest Art" of last year and will be a happy solution of the Christmas problem for book loving people. The writers of the letters in "The Friendly Craft" are Americans and range all the way from Increase Mather and Benjamin Franklin to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Aaron Burr, George Washington, Jefferson, Emerson and Lowell are included among the famous writers. Among the "rules of the craft" are "Write lengthy and often," John Hancock, "Write by every boat," "Tell the news—the news"—Rufus Choate, and "To acknowledge the receipt of letters is always proper to remove doubts of their miscarriage"—George Washington.

LAST MAHLER CONCERT.

Conducts the Symphony Orchestra for the Last of the Series.

Gustav Mahler conducted the New York Symphony Orchestra again yesterday afternoon at Carnegie Hall. It was the final of the three concerts for which Walter Damrosch invited Mr. Mahler to take his place. The conductor's stand, and the feature of the afternoon was the familiar fifth symphony of Beethoven. The big audience enjoyed it all, and Mr. Mahler could not but have been pleased by the reception given to him. The first part of the programme was made up of two overtures, Wagner's "Faust," and Weber's "Oberon." The advertisements in yesterday afternoon's programme contained the announcement that Mr. Mahler will conduct two concerts of the Philharmonic Society on the evenings of March 31 and April 6.

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